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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1656
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7930
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2547
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//ISA/NESA
RUEKDIA/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J2/J5
RHFMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J2/J4/J5

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000776

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO AIAG/HOLLIS SUMMERS, AIAG/TONY NEWTON AND
AIAG/NICHOLAS STUDZINSKI
DELHI PLEASE PASS TO FAS/OLIVER FLAKE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH CROSSES 100,000 BIRDS CULLED, INFECTIONS
CONTINUE TO SPREAD

REF: (A) DHAKA 743, (B) DHAKA 730, (C) DHAKA 626, (D) DHAKA 608, AND
PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Publicly, the GOB is claiming the H5N1 outbreak "has remained under control of the government except in a few places of the country," but as Bangladesh crosses the 100,000 birds culled mark, with ten districts reporting H5N1 infections in poultry and new infections reported weekly, behind the scenes everyone agrees there is still much work to be done. As per Bangladesh's National Response Plan, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock is still in charge of the response; since no human cases have been reported, the lead has not switched to Ministry of Health. GOB officials have met with representatives from the international donor community jointly and individually, and have agreed on a strategy to coordinate donor resources through committees focused on particular aspects of the outbreak response. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) GOB/DONOR INTERACTION. Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Adviser C.S. Karim held a series of meetings on avian influenza recently with key stakeholders in the donor community, including the four-person response team from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Crisis Management Center (FAO CMC) on April 21, as well as with the larger donor community on April 22 and privately with USAID country director Roger Carlson April 26. The PowerPoint presentation given by the Ministry on April 22 is available on Post's avian influenza intranet webpage, 10.208.1.12/dhkavianinfluenza.htm, along with other information and resources.

¶3. (SBU) FAO CMC TEAM. The FAO CMC team held meetings with GOB agencies, donor groups and NGOs, and toured infected sites during its two week visit 14 Q 27 April. The team held an informal verbal out-briefing with embassy personnel and donor representatives; their formal report is expected to be released 14 May. The mere presence of the team made a positive impact by starting a series of meetings and discussions which lead to in-person meetings between USAID Mission Director Carlson and other Emboffs and the Adviser for Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock as well as direct person to person contacts between Emboffs and Ministry officials at various levels to address specific issues.

¶4. (SBU) GOB ACCEPTS COMMITTEE STRATEGY. In the April 22 general and April 26 private meetings, Adviser Karim agreed to create focused committees to link up donors with Ministry staffers to address specific issues such as Personal Protective Equipment,

Compensation, Epidemiology, Communication, and Laboratory Capacity. This strategy was proposed to assist the GOB in addressing internal communications challenges and streamlining donor response to key needs. The Ministry had already formed its own compensation committee with poultry industry representatives, so these additional donor committees is not a huge departure for the organization but including the international donors is a positive step. Initial meetings of the Personal Protective Equipment and of the Import Restrictions committees are tentatively set for mid-May.

¶5. (SBU) COMPENSATION STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock is still working to coordinate a comprehensive compensation policy with industry representatives. To date, no compensation has been paid, although the media continues to report that poultry farmers will receive compensation for culled birds, will receive replacement birds, feed and medicines at no charge, and that commercial lenders have agreed to soften loan terms and issue new loans. Econoff met with an industry representative on this committee during field visits to infected farms (reported ref A) who confirmed that discussions are underway on the compensation plan. He feels that the poultry industry in Bangladesh is in serious economic trouble and some of the smaller operators will be unable to replace their culled stocks without government assistance.

¶6. (SBU) CURRENT USG ACTIVITIES. USAID has begun to distribute Personal Protective Equipment kits from the second shipment, and will expand training to include district level Veterinary Officers May 14. USAID has also brought in a consultant from USAIDQs regional office in Bangkok to work with the Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute laboratory staff and has already identified relatively inexpensive ways to improve lab performance in a short period of time. Specifically, they established that adding a

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mini-gel electrophoresis unit would substantially boost the number of samples the lab can run per day.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT. Both the outbreak and Bangladesh's response continue to evolve. The formation of specific committees to address focused issues will be a big step forward for donor coordination and moving toward practical steps that can be practically implemented. However, taking decisions made in Dhaka and converting them to rigorously implemented field actions will remain the biggest challenge, as econoff's recent visit to infected farms, reported ref A, shows. In addition, how quickly basic laboratory capacity, reported ref B, can increase will be a practical limit on how much and how quickly Bangladesh can expand its response to the outbreak.

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